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COMMODORE ALEXANDER GILLON AND THE FRIGATE SOUTH CAROLINA.

BY D. E. HUGER SMITH.

Alexander Gillon is said to have been born in Rotterdam, and to have there commenced his career as an apprentice of a Dutch mercantile house. However this may have been, it was as the master of the brigantine *Surprise*, that we find him in Charles Town in February, 1765, and, while master of the brigantine *Free-Mason*, he there married, July 6, 1766, Mrs. Mary Cripps¹, the widow of William Cripps of the county of Kent in England, but at some time a resident of the province. She was the daughter of Richard Splatt, a merchant of Charles Town, by his wife Ann Mellish.

In the *Gazette* of August 1, 1766, it is mentioned that Captain Gillon sailed for Cowes in his ship July 20th, a few days after his marriage. He soon, however, returned to Charles Town, where he established and carried on for years a large and profitable mercantile business.

At the outbreak of the Revolution he owned in Charles Town a residence on East Bay with a front on the river of a hundred feet, and a parallel water lot running to the channel; also a dock on the river, contiguous to the Exchange. The position of these properties is marked even now by the name of Gillon Street. He also owned fifteen lots on Meeting, Hasell, and King streets, and a plantation or tract of 5500 acres on the Congaree River. Upon all these pieces of real estate, with their appurtenances and other property, he set a valuation of thirty thousand pounds sterling. At that time also he was a merchant in active trade, with a correspondence and credit not surpassed in South Carolina, or perhaps on the continent.

When the year 1775 opened, it had become apparent to the bolder spirits that the differences between the American

¹See *The South-Carolina Gazette* of July 14, 1766.

colonies and the mother country must inevitably be subjected to the arbitrament of war, and on April 19th, the battle of Lexington opened the struggle.

Prominent among the volunteer companies that sprang immediately into existence in South Carolina was one called the German Fusiliers, which was organized in May, 1775, with Alexander Gillon as its captain, which commission he held until the end of 1777. This company served creditably during the Revolution, and has ever since held an honourable place in the militia forces of Charleston.

But not by valor alone could these bold rebels hope to resist the power of Great Britain, which in their nakedness they had defied. Arms and the munitions of war must be seized and purchased, and not the least interesting chapters in the history of that extraordinary struggle are those which record the efforts to secure them. For services of this kind, Gillon's enterprising character and his mercantile relations in Europe made him peculiarly fit. As early as October, 1775, he had made a contract with Congress by which he and they should each advance ten thousand pounds sterling for the purpose of importing munitions of war.

These operations appear to have resulted favorably, for the three vessels employed on this business in the beginning of 1776 all returned safely in the course of that year, two of them to this State, with everything expected by them. Undoubtedly it was in reference to this undertaking that Henry Laurens, President of the Council of Safety, wrote to Gillon, March 15, 1776, that he had ordered the brigantine *Comet* and schooner *Defence* of the South Carolina Navy to Winyah Bar in order to convoy to the edge of soundings Gillon's two vessels.¹

On November 8, 1775, Gillon was elected a member of the Provincial Congress of South Carolina, and, on account of his nautical knowledge, on the 28th of the same month he was added to the commission for arming, fitting out, and manning the ship *Prosper* for the naval service.

At the time of Clinton's invasion of South Carolina in

¹See *The South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine*, Vol. IV., pp. 201-203.

June, 1776, Gillon was at the North, and he approached Congress with a proposal to despatch to the coast of South Carolina what naval force they could gather, which, through his knowledge of the harbors and inlets of the coast, might seriously harass the large fleet of British transports, and especially so after the men-of-war should have crossed the bar. For reasons which do not appear, this suggestion could not be acted on.

His business aptitude must have been appreciated, however, for November 28, 1777, the Committee of Commerce reported on certain proposals made by him to the Continental Congress, "That they have conferred with Mr. Gillon on the subject and are of opinion that a sum of money not exceeding \$250,000 should be advanced to the said Alexander Gillon, Esqre., or to his attorneys annually for three years, if the war with Great Britain shall continue so long; the said advances to be made by this committee, or such other as may hereafter be appointed to superintend the Continental Commerce in such sums and at such periods as may be necessary for accomplishing purchases of suitable produce or other articles to be remitted to Europe.

"That the said Alexander Gillon, Esqre., or his attorneys, shall purchase all the remittances they make, and charter or purchase ships suitable for transporting same to Europe" * * * * * "That the said Alexander Gillon shall forthwith repair to Europe and purchase" etc., etc.

This report was adopted and the Committee authorized to enter into the contract. Thereupon, December 13, 1777, it having been reported to Congress that the Committee had entered into this agreement, it was

"Ordered That a warrant issue on the Commissioner of the Loan office for the State of South Carolina in favour of Alexander Gillon Esqre. for the sum of \$125,000 to enable him to execute the contract," etc.

Under this contract Gillon was to have been allowed certain commissions on purchases and sales, both in Europe and America, which he estimated would have netted him seven thousand pounds sterling per annum. He forthwith set out from Philadelphia for Charles Town, where he

expected to embark for Europe. On his way he received a letter advising him of his impending appointment to naval command in the service of South Carolina. To this he replied that if His Excellency (John Rutledge), the President of South Carolina, could arrange the matter with Congress, he would relinquish this important and remunerative appointment, and would give his best services to his own State. Rutledge must have been successful in his arrangements with Congress, for, in the *Gazette* of February 16, 1778, is the following:

The Honourable the Legislative Council and General Assembly by joint ballot have elected Alexander Gillon Esqre. Commodore, and John Joyner, William Robertson, and John McQueen Esqres. Captains of frigates in the navy of this State.

Gillon tells us that the General Assembly thus confirmed President Rutledge's choice by a vote of 125 out of a total of 126.

It must be now borne in mind that on March 5, 1778, President Rutledge, refusing to sign the Bill which enacted the new Constitution, resigned the presidency. After a delay of several days, Rawlins Lowndes was elected President, which post he held until February, 1779, when Rutledge became the first governor chosen under the new Constitution, remaining in power until the meeting, in January, 1782, of the famous Jacksonborough Assembly, which elected John Mathews as his successor, and sent Rutledge again to the Continental Congress.

In pursuance of their object, by resolution of March 28, 1778, the General Assembly appropriated \$500,000 for the purpose of building or purchasing three frigates, which sum of money was to be sent to Europe in the shape of country produce or merchandize. In case of deficiency after the sale in Europe of such of these shipments as might escape the enemy, Commodore Gillon was authorized on the credit of the State to raise in Europe loans to the extent of such deficiency. On July 7, 1778 a special commission under authority of this resolution was issued to Gillon by President Lowndes, countersigned by John Huger, the Secretary of State.

This rather cumbrous method of remitting moneys to

Europe was in general use during that period of financial stress. The State governments had no surplus cash for the purchase of bills of exchange, and specie could hardly be said to exist in communities staggering under the weight of irredeemable paper currencies at frightful discounts. But what had been theretofore known as colonial produce met a ready sale in Europe, and the chief risk in the remittance was the serious but unavoidable one of capture.

While delayed in Charles Town by this business, Commodore Gillon projected and executed, under the orders of President Lowndes, a successful and profitable attack upon sundry British vessels blocking the harbor of Charles Town. President Lowndes engaged the services of the Connecticut State ship *Defence*, Capt. Samuel Smedley, and the sloop *Volant*, Capt. Oliver Daniel, both lying in the harbor. The latter was manned by volunteers, and on the ship went Commodore Gillon and Captains Robertson and McQueen. Crossing the bar, they captured before night the *Governor Tonym's Revenge* of twelve guns and seventy-two men, and the *Ranger* of eight guns and thirty-five men, both privateers of St. Augustine. The *Active* of twelve guns and fifty-seven men escaped in the darkness. The history of this little feat of arms has passed through curious vicissitudes. The following account in *The Gazette of The State of South-Carolina* of June 24, 1778, is bald and condensed, as such things were in those days:

Last Friday morning sailed on a cruize the Connecticut state ship *Defence*, commanded by Samuel Smedley Esq; and the Sloop *Volant*, commanded by Capt. Oliver Daniel, and before night took two privateer sloops fitted out from St. Augustine, viz. the *Governor Tonym's Revenge*, of 12 carriage guns and 72 men, commanded by Capt. Peter Bachop; and the *Ranger* of 8 guns and 35 men, Capt. Osborn commander; who were both brought into port the next day. The *Active* privateer of Liverpool, of 12 guns, and 57 men, would have been likewise taken, but took advantage of the near approach of night and thick weather, and made off, while the prisoners on board *Bachop* were securing, and *Osborn* was coming up.

It reflects particular honour on Capt. Smedley, that immediately upon his Excellency the President's application to that gentleman, he had his ship prepared and ready for sea by Wednesday evening, notwithstanding the difficulties of her then performing quarantine in Rebellion Road; Capt. Daniel's vessel was unloaded, manned with volunteers and proceeded to the Road on Tuesday night; and the service was greatly forwarded by the animated exertions of Commodore Gillon, who, with Capt. Robinson, and Capt. McQueen afterwards went volunteers in the ship.

Dr. Johnson, in his *Traditions and Reminiscences of the Revolution*, pp. 127-129, gives a highly-colored and utterly erroneous account of a similar sortie. McCrady, in his history, very properly discredits Johnson's narrative, but, not having found the foregoing account and other allusions¹ to it in the *Gazette*, dismisses as fabulous the whole matter. Thus a creditable deed passed from extravagant and inaccurate eulogy to blank negation!

Of Gillon's three captains most is known of Captain John Joyner, who followed his fortunes to the bitter end. As early as 1762 we find him commanding one of the armed "Scoutboats" in the employ of the province. One of the occasional notices of him tells how, under the orders of the governor, he had made in his boat a survey of the St. Juan River in Florida as high up as the Spanish fort of Picolata. By the Council of Safety he was employed in sundry confidential ways. Under instructions of the Secret Committee, with Captain John Barnwell, of Beaufort, and Captains Brown and Habersham, of Georgia, he organized an expedition which drove from the Savannah River the British armed vessel there lying and seized on an incoming ship 7000 pounds of powder for South Carolina, and 9000 pounds for Georgia. Of this powder, the Secret Committee despatched 5000 pounds to Philadelphia for use by Washington's army, then lying before Boston. In October, 1775, Joyner was one of the commissioners for repairing Fort Lyttelton, of which fort he was later for a time the commandant.

Commodore Gillon sailed from Charles Town probably during August, 1778, for the *Gazette* of October 14, 1778, has in it the following notice of his arrival in Havana:

State Brig Notre-Dame commanded by William Hall Esq., which lately carried Alexander Gillon Esq., Commodore of the Navy of this

¹"Ask *your friend*, who has more merit in the orders he gave, than I had in executing them, if I did not in 1778, *project* and *execute* the plan of bringing in more guns, and more men, in forty-eight hours time, than we had on board of the vessels we went to sea with, and that at a time when our coast was beset with *British* men of war and privateers, and when in the *very act of capturing*, there was some danger."—Extract from an open letter from Commodore Gillon to Gen. Christopher Gadsden, published in *The Gazette of the State of South-Carolina* of September 9, 1784.

State, with Captains Robertson and McQueen and several other officers to Havannah where they met with a very cordial reception, is returned from thence.

How and when Gillon made the journey from Havana to Paris is not known, but he tells us that in the spring of 1779, he approached the French government with a plan that would have relieved Georgia, then assailed by the British. At this time he was already asking the French government to sell to the State of South Carolina the two ships built and building in Amsterdam.

In Paris Gillon found himself plunged into the whirlpool of diplomatic intrigue, of which Franklin was the central figure, the accounts of which form most interesting chapters of Revolutionary history. These have been largely drawn from the voluminous, and yet partial, publications of Franklin's correspondence, where one is surprised at the marked absence of certain letters showing that, for some reason, only a selected correspondence has been made public. As an example, we find in Wharton's *Diplomatic Correspondence of the American Revolution* but one letter from Franklin to Gillon, and *not one* from Gillon to Franklin—not even the important one of which Franklin speaks in his letter to John Laurens dated November 8, 1781.

From that one published letter of Franklin to Gillon, dated July 5, 1779, it seems clear that they had quickly come to points. In that letter Franklin commended Gillon for his zeal in behalf of South Carolina, and regretted that he could not assist him in his object. But, besides asking his aid in procuring the ships from the French government, Gillon seems to have laid before Franklin a scheme for raising for his State, in France, a loan of 1,800,000 livres at seven per cent. interest of which Franklin, in so many words, disapproved, giving one very excellent reason, viz: that this and similar efforts on the part of individual States were interfering with a loan at lower interest which he was charged to negotiate in behalf of the Continental government.

From this time on, Franklin seems to have lost no opportunity of obstructing Gillon's efforts; in which obstruction

he used at times language certainly not justified by the facts, but which proves personal vindictiveness. It is impossible, for want of material, to follow, with any minuteness, Gillon's attempts to carry out the object of his mission, but we have enough before us to note the salient events and to follow with interest his alternations of discouragement and hope.

Following his ill success in France, which Henry Laurens, on October 4, 1779, wrote to Adams would "possibly abate a little of his fervor for accomplishing every thing by the force of his own powers", he seems to have tried his fortunes in other lands. "Legalizations" of President Lowndes's special commission, signed by Franklin at Passy September 27, 1779, and by Arthur Lee at Paris September 29, 1779, seem to mark the date of his departure from Paris; for at Frankfort-on-the-Main, William Lee signed October 10, 1779, a "legalization" of the same commission.

By the end of the year 1779 Gillon was probably in Amsterdam, where lay two fine frigates, one launched, though not entirely equipped; the other not yet completed, though she too might be launched within four months. These had been built by the court of France for American account, but for some reason had been given up or sold, by our commissioners at Paris, to the French court. For months Gillon had been vainly imploring all conceivable aid to induce the French government to sell them to the State, and it must have been with a heavy heart that he wrote on March 1, 1780, two interesting letters. The first, of which there is a copy in the Laurens Collection, was to Samuel Huntingdon, the President of Congress. After some complaint of the lack of aid from those of whom he had a right to expect it, in his main object, he made suggestions as to raising a loan for the United States in Holland, and then proceeded:

I am now here trying to purchase the two best ships, I believe, in the world. They are 186 feet keel, and can mount 28 thirty-six pounders on one deck; one launched and has everything ready to depart, the other could be launched in four months. * * * * I wrote to Mr. Franklin fully on this business, assured him that I had money enough to pay for one of these ships and perhaps both, craving him to apply to Mr. de Sartine, whose Court owned these ships for to sell

them at a valuation of four indifferent persons chosen by both parties here.

But though I wrote said letter in December he has not deigned to favour me with any reply thereto. This is doing as he has done on every matter I applied to him on * * * * *

He adds that he has received from Mr. Adams and both Messrs Lee as well as from Mr. Izard every aid in their power, but that others were "more industrious to prevent any person succeeding from America, who did not come to their shop." The information, both financial and political, given in this letter is very interesting, but must be passed over for want of space.

The other letter of the same date (March 1, 1780) was addressed to Gov. John Rutledge. It was captured on the way by the British, who made it the basis of complaint to and against the Dutch government. It was printed in extenso in *The Royal Gazette*, of Charles Town, May 5, 1781, and will well repay a careful perusal. In this Gillon gave the date of his last letter as of December 31, 1778, and explained the absence of opportunity to write since. He promised to forward copy of correspondence between Mr. Chamont¹, and a gentleman writing for him about the two ships in Amsterdam, believing that they never were in earnest about selling them to him. He complained that Franklin never answered his letters. Upon the arrival of Mr. Adams in Paris he had thought to renew the matter and had written to him, to Mr. Izard, and to Mr. Lee to apply to M. de Sartine and to M. de Vergennes for the two ships, offering to pay first cost or to take them at a valuation. His replies, received the night before, had caused him to abandon hope of obtaining these two fine ships. He had therefore determined to convert all the money of the State into spikes, nails, cordage, canvas, cables, anchors, etc., and everything that he could recollect as necessary for the construction of three frigates, and also to invest any surplus in clothing for troops, shipping all these articles to St. Eustatius. He then spoke of a credit of thirty thousand pounds given him in Amsterdam on his own credit, until

¹Probably M. Donatien LeRay de Chaumont, whose house at Passy was occupied by Franklin. (See Wharton, Vol. I., p. 125.)

Rutledge he heard from, and of the loan of Mr. Streikeisen, etc. He suggested that the three frigates could be then built in Philadelphia, Boston, or Portsmouth, New Hampshire. He continued thus:

The opposition I met in France convinces me that they never mean America should have a navy, else they certainly would have sold the two ships they have lying idle here, &c., &c.

Capt. Joyner and all the other officers would return by way of St. Eustatius, and he (Gillon) would soon follow. He then asked Rutledge to address him there, and, if possible, to obtain the services of two or three Continental frigates to convoy them to America. He had received no line from his government since January 31, 1779, and was thus compelled to act without orders, in the trust that the governor and his country would approve. He added a belief that he had in a credit way achieved as much as any person sent from America to Europe, considering that the State had been absolutely invaded. The rest of the letter contained information and suggestions as to the raising of loans in Holland. This letter ended with regrets that he had not remained in America, as any fatigue or danger was preferable to the "begging plan" that necessity by cruel disappointments had compelled him to adopt. In a postscript he complained that M. Beaumarchais would pay nothing yet, nor furnish accounts. From this it may be surmised that a portion of the American produce shipped for Gillon's use had been consigned to Beaumarchais, whose connection with American affairs in France was important, and has been fully dealt with by Wharton and others.

It would seem quite natural that the credit of South Carolina should at this date have been affected, for in the spring and summer of 1779 Prévost had marched through the country from Savannah to Charles Town, inflicting a devastation only exceeded by that of Sherman in 1865. It was also known that in December, 1779, Clinton had sailed from New York, with a powerful army and fleet, intended for the reduction of Charles Town and for the conquest of South Carolina.

To increase Gillon's troubles during the coming period,

as we must constantly remember, Charles Town actually capitulated to Clinton May 12, 1780, and on December 30, 1780, there was published in *The South-Carolina and American General Gazette*, of Charles Town, a notice of the sequestration to the British Crown of the estates real and personal of sundry rebels, and among them that of Alexander Gillon, for their wicked and desperate perseverance in opposing to the utmost of their power the "reestablishment of his Majesty's just and lawful authority". During this period too, Mrs. Gillon had been expelled from Charles Town by the conquerors, and had sought a refuge at the North, and her son, John Splatt Cripps, had been sent as a political prisoner to St. Augustine. It must be remembered also that civil government in South Carolina from May, 1780, until January, 1782, existed solely in the person of the great John Rutledge, who, during that period, exercised the powers of a dictator.

We turn again to Gillon in Amsterdam, where with aching heart he was still coveting the "two finest ships in the world" for the service of his State. How he made the acquaintance of the Chevalier Ann Paul Emanuel Sigismund de Montmorency Luxembourg, and by what influence said Chevalier obtained from the King of France the loan or use for three years of his frigate *L'Indien*, does not appear. But it seems a curious coincidence that, on the very day when the Commodore wrote the two despairing letters quoted above, the King of France granted to the Chevalier his petition for the use of the frigate. For want of material we cannot follow the negotiation between the Commodore and Luxembourg, but, on May 30, 1780, only eighteen days after the fall of Charles Town, Alexander Gillon, Commodore of the Navy of South Carolina, a resident of Charles Town, but then staying in Paris, at the Hotel des Bains d'Orléans, Rue de Richelieu, by virtue of the resolution of the State, of March 28, 1778, and a special commission from His Excellency, Rawlins Lowndes, President and Commander-in-Chief, bearing date July 7, 1778, signed a contract or treaty with Ann Paul Emanuel Sigismund de Montmorency de Luxembourg, then residing at the Hotel

Montmorency Tingry, Rue de Varenne, the said Chevalier, by the goodness of the King, being the grantee for three years of the frigate *L'Indien*, with the privilege of purchasing her at the end of that period, if her cruises should not be finished.

We can imagine the exultation with which Gillon signed this paper, with its promise of fame and fortune to himself, and of good service to his prostrate State, the while he thus released from Pandora's box, for himself, financial ruin and a life-long struggle against a sea of troubles, and, for his State, complications to be ended only after the lapse of three quarters of a century.

By Article 1. of this treaty the Chevalier ceded to the State for three years this frigate.

By Article 2. Gillon bound himself to get the ship out of Amsterdam in the space of six weeks, and out of Texel Road in three months, and to maintain her at the expense of the State.

By Article 3. the said Gillon was to command the ship under orders of the State, to be replaced, in case of sickness or death, by officer appointed by the State.

By Article 4. the ship was to be employed only in cruising against the common enemies of the King and the United States.

By Article 5. all prizes were to be sent to France and consigned to M. Grand, banker in Paris; if this should be impossible, proceeds of same to be remitted to Grand to be divided in France according to the laws of South Carolina.

By Article 6. the proceeds of prizes etc. were to be divided—one half to crew, one quarter to State, and one quarter to the Chevalier.

By Article 7. if the ship should be otherwise employed, indemnification was to be made to the Chevalier.

By Article 8. the ship was to be returned at end of three years, furnished with all her artillery, at Port of l'Orient.

By Article 9. if the ship should be returned sooner, it should be done equally at expense of State, and at same Port.

By Article 10. in case the ship should be safely returned, there would be due to the Chevalier :

1st, one fourth part of all prizes, etc., as previously stipulated.

2nd, the sum of one hundred thousand livres, which the Chevalier acknowledged to have already received.

In case the ship should be lost or taken by the enemy, then :

1st, the fourth part of prizes as stated.

2nd, the sum of four hundred thousand livres, including the said one hundred thousand livres.

As to the remaining three hundred thousand livres, the payment was to be made in specie, through the hands of the *Sieur Grand*, before the expiration of said three years, without interest.

By Article 11. Gillon pledged the public faith of the State and all its property, domains, possessions, and revenues, as well as his own, both present and future in solido, for the payment of the said three hundred thousand livres.

By Article 12. Gillon pledged himself that this treaty should be ratified by the State within nine months; yet, nevertheless, the lack of ratification should not impede its execution, and Luxembourg reserved the right to notify these presents to the State through the French Minister.¹

From this time the frigate was called by her new name the *South-Carolina*. By this treaty it may be seen that Gillon bound himself to get the frigate to the Texel within six weeks from the date of his possession of it, and to sea within three months, that is to say somewhere about September, 1780. But in point of fact the ship went actually to sea at some time during August, 1781, or about eleven months later. The causes of this delay became a matter of serious contention between the State and the Prince when, in 1784, the latter formulated his demands on the State. It may be well, though out of place, to mention

¹For the text of this treaty see Vol. III., Series 3, William Lough-ton Smith collection of pamphlets, and Vol. XI., DeSaussure collection of pamphlets, Charleston Library.

It must be remembered throughout this account that the term "dollar" means the Spanish milled dollar, and that this was the equivalent of about five livres tournois.

here that in March, 1784, the General Assembly adopted a report, which concluded that it appeared to the joint committee, "that Commodore Gillon used his most strenuous efforts to get the South Carolina to sea with all possible despatch, and that he was prevented from so doing, sooner than he did, by insurmountable obstacles". Gillon in his letter to John Laurens, of April 22, 1781, now in the Laurens Collection, gives the reason for his delay in getting the ship into the Texel:

Easterly winds and want of water prevented ye ship (tho on her Broadside) getting over ye shoals that are in the river upwards of seventy miles distance from Amsterdam till ye 30th of October last, and untill she was over those Shoals was obliged to keep her with a swept Hold or nothing in her so that we had every thing to take in after that from Amsterdam, this was nearly accomplish'd when ye winter began to set in, that, and ye Marines not arriving as expected compell'd us to get ye Ship out of her Eminent danger of ye Ice into ye same winter quarters as ye Dutch Men of War were in near ye Texel, to accomplish this we were oblig'd to put into Lighters every thing on board except part of ye Iron Ballast, this navigation being very Intricate & Shallow, Capt. John Joyner who commands this Ship could not get her out into ye Texel Road till about ye 12th of March since when he has been constantly employed in taking in his Ballast, Water, Provisions, Guns, Stores, & Cargo and getting ye ship compleat for Sea * * * * *

To account for the absence of his marines mentioned in this letter leads us to narrate a most interesting episode in the history of this matter, the invasion of Jersey in January, 1781. A certain body of soldiery, called the Legion of Luxembourg, or the Volunteers of Luxembourg, had been enlisted by the Chevalier to serve as marines on the *South Carolina*. These had been assembled at Dunkerque to await there the time when the ship might be ready for sea, so as to lessen the danger of interference on the part of the Dutch Government, then at peace with England. About the middle of November, 1780, these troops left Dunkerque and proceeded by order of the Chevalier to Havre, where they seem to have been still awaiting an opportunity of joining the *South Carolina*. The Baron de Rullecour, who had assisted in raising this corps, and at the time commanded them, taking advantage of the delay, proposed to the Chevalier an expedition against the Island of Jersey. The Baron had taken part as second in com-

¹See Vol. I. of this *Magazine*, p. 136.

mand in a previous descent on Jersey in 1779, under the Prince of Nassau-Siegen, and was keenly desirous to push his own fortunes by another and more successful one. The permission of the King of France was obtained, and, in case of success, de Rullecour was to be rewarded with the commission of a general in the French Army, the Order of St. Louis, and the government of Jersey. The troops, composed of the Volunteers of Luxembourg with drafts from other corps, to the number of about two thousand, were collected at Granville on the coast of Normandy, where transports were provided for them under the protection of certain privateers. Owing to illness the Chevalier de Luxembourg was forced to remain behind when the embarkation took place.

On Christmas night 1780, a fire between Rozel and La Coupe in Jersey, burning for eight minutes, and answered from the opposits coast, assured the invaders that no British warships were then on the station. Impatiently anxious to use the opportunity, de Rullecour at once embarked in the teeth of a storm, by which his fleet was dispersed, and ten vessels with half his troops returned to France and were lost to the expedition. With the remainder he sought shelter in a group of small islands off the coast, whence he sailed again January 5, 1781, and landed that night in Jersey. His disembarkation was unlucky, only about six hundred men reaching the shore, and two of his vessels were wrecked and many men drowned. A small redoubt at Grouville near the place of landing, manned by a militia party, was quickly surprised and seized without alarming the British. Leaving here about one hundred men to secure his retreat, de Rullecour marched at once upon St. Helier. The garrison of the island consisted of about 1900 British regulars, and the militia numbered about as many more. Reaching without detention the market place of the town, the guard was surprised and captured, one man only escaping to the quarters of the 78th Regiment. Major Corbett, the lieutenant-governor, was at once made a prisoner, but not before he had sent off messengers to alarm the military posts in other parts of the island, held by the 78th, 83rd, and

95th Regiments. He was carried before the French commander in the court house, who proposed to him terms of capitulation under threats of burning the town and putting the inhabitants to the sword. Claiming that as a prisoner he was without authority he at first refused, but alarmed for the safety of the place he finally, with Fort-Major Hogge, signed the capitulation and sent orders to the troops not to move from their barracks. He also ordered Captain Aylward, commanding Elizabeth Castle, to surrender his post, which order the latter promptly refused to obey. Meantime Major Peirson, of the 95th Regiment, next in rank to the lieutenant-governor, took command of the troops, which, with the militia, assembled on the heights near the town. Having been informed of the capitulation he answered with a peremptory demand for the surrender of the French within twenty minutes. After which, dividing his men into two parties, he quickly carried the market-place, where, in the moment of success, he fell shot through the heart. His fall has been immortalized by Copley's fine picture, which hangs in the National Gallery in London. His remains lie within the church at St. Helier, under a monument erected by the island. Nearby in the churchyard rests the body of de Rullecour, who, too, had fallen mortally wounded.

During the fight in the town, a party of the 83rd Regiment assaulted and carried at the point of the bayonet the redoubt at Grouville, giving no quarter to the defenders, and taking prisoner one man only, a wounded officer.

The British loss in killed and wounded in these conflicts aggregated 81, while that of the French was 152. In addition 417 were taken prisoners, making the total French loss on the island 569 men. How many of these belonged to the *South Carolina* does not appear, but among the claims against the State of South Carolina, adjudicated after the Revolution, appear those of Class 3 of the Legionaries; namely, those who invaded Jersey.

This event is particularly interesting to us because of de Rullecour's connection with the *South Carolina*, and because a considerable portion of his men were in the service of the

State. De Rullecour's conduct after landing with less than a third of his men seems to have been bold and enterprising in the extreme, and one cannot but admire the nerve, skill, and courage shown in such desperate straits. This account has been based upon the contemporaneous one in *The Royal Gazette*, of Charles Town, and that in Tupper's *History of Jersey*. It would be well to note here that the Luxembourg troops, finally turned over to the ship, did not come on board until June 8, 1781.

Returning to Gillon and his difficulties in Amsterdam, we learn from his letters to John Laurens that funds in his hands had been only sufficient to pay the ship's disbursements until November or December, 1780, before which date he had fully expected to sail. The large extra expenses caused by the unforeseen delays he had met by selling a portion of the supplies bought by the State, and by borrowing certain sums for which he had to provide. For all transactions for account of the State he had given his personal guarantee, but the fact that his property lay within the State had caused his own credit also to be seriously impaired by the invasion of her territory. To assist his credit in Amsterdam, he wrote to the Chevalier on December 7, 1780, asking the loan of his special commission, which had been left in the hands of the notary before whom the treaty was signed. This was peremptorily refused. His political troubles were likewise very great, for the British minister, Sir Joseph Yorke, was paying particular attention to the matter of the *South Carolina*, in order to find a pretext to attack the Dutch for a violation of their neutrality. Under this pressure, Gillon had written to Luxembourg November 24, 1780, that he had found that "the Law of this Country must totally guide us, for so sure as we commit any Error in the Laws, *all is over*; for it seems that our breaking through any Laws of this Land is now the only Hope our Enemies have of detaining us by real and justifiable Arrest." The object of this letter was to point out certain expedients for evading these laws in the transportation from Dunkerque of ammunition, arms, and other munitions of war for the frigate.

Gillon's appeal to Colonel Laurens lay bare his situation, and was frank and explicit as to his difficulties. He was equally frank in stating what it would remain for him to do if Laurens could not assist him:

1st. To lay the matter before those who had given credit to the State, getting them to take back their goods, and to sell at best whatever had been paid for.

2nd. To sell all the ship's stores and provisions and ammunition bought by him, and out of proceeds to pay the officers and men their just claims, paying over the residue to the creditors of the ship and State.

3rd. To deliver up the ship to the Chevalier de Luxembourg conformably to his contract, or to leave her where she was until the time should have expired.

4th. To abandon the business in which he had persevered with all the assiduity and prudence of which he was master, little thinking that it would bring him to bankruptcy on account of his State, and to return home to lay the particulars of his conduct before that tribunal, which alone had the right to approve or condemn him.

But the appeals to Laurens were to bear fruit, for on April 28, 1781, they signed in Paris a memorandum of agreement, which was expected to lift Gillon out of his embarrassments¹. It may be interesting to note that this instrument was certified by the famous Thomas Paine, the stormy petrel of three countries, who left footprints upon the history of each of them. Therein it was recited that Gillon had under his command, for the State of South Carolina, a new frigate laden with a cargo of clothing and naval supplies belonging to the said State; that he was prevented from sailing by the want of ten thousand pounds sterling; and that by virtue of the powers vested in him he was prepared to transfer the cargo to Laurens on Continental account. This was accepted by Laurens on conditions:

1st. That Gillon submit original invoices of cargo, and Laurens, or his agent, select such articles as might be wanted for Continental service.

¹Copies of this and of Laurens's various letters on the subject are to be found in Vols. I. and II. of this *Magazine*.

2nd. That Gillon cede such articles at prime cost to the amount of ten thousand pounds sterling.

3rd. That Gillon reland and exclude from his ship all private adventures whatever, and all such bulky articles as might not be selected by Laurens, and reduce his provisions to the quantity required for a voyage to Philadelphia, so as to leave at Laurens's disposal the greatest possible stowage capacity for further supplies.

4th. That Gillon engage to go to sea by May 20th at farthest.

5th. That Gillon proceed without loss of time to Philadelphia, to deliver the supplies he should have on board on Continental account.

6th. Laurens engaged that Gillon's account for merchandise transferred should be paid by bills drawn by the minister of the United States in Holland (then John Adams) on the minister of the United States in France (then Benjamin Franklin) at six months sight.

7th. That on receipt of which bills Gillon, who now acknowledged the cession, was to sign receipts more particularly specifying said transfer.

The witness to this agreement was Capt. William Jackson, of the South Carolina Continental Line, secretary to Colonel Laurens, who was at once instructed to proceed to Amsterdam and there to act in behalf of Colonel Laurens, with the assistance of the minister, to whom Laurens forwarded a copy of the agreement, with an explanation of his motives. Among these was his desire to transmit by the *South Carolina* a part of the specie destined for the United States, which had been put under his control. Of this specie Laurens stated to Adams that he expected to obtain two millions of livres, to arrive in Holland in time to be transmitted by the *South Carolina*; that two millions more would accompany himself when he should sail during the next month; and that five millions would be procured at Vera Cruz, or the Havana. The letter to Adams was dated April 28, 1781, and on the following day Laurens wrote to the Directeur General des Finances that Capt. William Jackson was authorized to sign for the money destined to

go forward from Holland, while he personally would receipt for what should leave from Brest.¹ In the same letter to Adams, Laurens further advised him that the additional cargo for the *South Carolina* was to be provided and shipped by Mr. J. de Neufville, under the superintendence of Capt. Jackson, Aide-de-Camp to General Lincoln. He also requested Mr. Adams to draw the bills for the new purchases in favour of J. de Neufville and Co., and for the cargo already on board, in favour of Commodore Gillon, upon his application.

In reply to this letter, Adams wrote to Laurens:

I am very happy to find it is in your power to assist Commodore Gillon upon this occasion, whose industry and skill and perseverance have merited every assistance that can be legally given him.²

Laurens sailed from Brest in May, 1781, and arrived in Boston August 25, 1781, bringing with him over two millions livres in cash, and a shipload of military stores. From his letters and the agreement above quoted, it seems apparent:

1st. That Gillon was to produce the invoices of the cargo already shipped, and to turn over to Jackson for Continental account goods to the value of ten thousand pounds sterling against payment for same in bills of exchange by Adams on Franklin.

2nd. That Jackson was to receipt for the specie, and to attend to the embarkation of it, *and not Gillon*.

3rd. That the control of all further purchases and of their delivery to the ship was placed in the hands of de Neufville and of Jackson, and *not in Gillon's*.

4th. That Gillon was to proceed to sea by May 20th at farthest.

In no particular do the intentions of Laurens appear to have been fully carried out, and the historical material on which to apportion the blame with justice has either disappeared, or must be brought to the surface by further research or by accident. Yet it is well to point out certain questions that arise under the heads just given:

¹See Wharton's *Diplomatic Correspondence*.

²*Life and Writings of John Adams*, Vol. VII., p. 416.

1st. Why was Gillon not able to pay off his debts in Amsterdam with the ten thousand pounds which, under Laurens's instructions, should have come to him?

That Gillon had not received these bills of exchange, seems inexplicable, and hardly credible, but we are so told by Franklin in a letter to Adams, written on October 25th, more than two months after Gillon had sailed, and when the South Carolina was at Corunna:

If Gillon really produced to Jackson the ten thousand pounds worth of goods, why did he keep back from him the bills of exchange that were to pay for them, and with which Gillon might have paid his debts?

And if he could not produce them, why did Jackson keep the bills, carry them to sea, and not return them to me?

When we see him perhaps he can explain this. At present I am in the dark.

The "sheet of vindication", written from Corunna by Gillon to Franklin, might have explained this, but it, as well as all others of Gillon's letters to Franklin, has been omitted in the various publications of Franklin's correspondence.

2nd. The story of the detention of the specie has been told by Franklin and by Jackson in their published letters, and would concern us not at all but that it was made the occasion of a baseless and unjust attack upon Gillon's patriotism, integrity, honour, and credit, which attack was persisted in, even when disproved by events. This specie was already in Amsterdam when its embarkation was finally stopped by the French government, at the request of Franklin, who on July 6, 1781, wrote to de Vergennes that M. Grand (his banker in Paris) had told him that he could not continue paying his acceptances after the 10th instant, and asked the French minister whether the best method would not be to retain the money in Holland, not yet put aboard the ship. In this letter may be found these very injurious words about Gillon:

I have no opinion of Capt. [Sic] Gillon's conduct or of the safety of the conveyance by any ship under his care.

On the same day he wrote to Jackson:

* * * as to the safety of the excellent conveyance you mention, I must own I have some doubts about it, and I fear I shall hear of the arrival of that ship in England before she sees America.

Such suggestions from such a source were well calculated utterly to destroy the financial credit of Gillon, already injured by the course of the war, and possibly may have served Jackson as an excuse for withholding the payment to Gillon of the ten thousand pounds due to the State under Laurens's engagement. And if, by any chance whatever, this suggestion reached the Chevalier de Luxembourg through the French minister or otherwise, it would not require an active imagination to depict the effect upon him.

3rd. Of the goods bought by Neufville and Jackson and intended to go forward by the *South Carolina*, we have heard in some detail. Neufville and Jackson bought supplies largely in excess of their authority and largely in excess of what would fill the available cargo space of the *South Carolina*. To carry this excess they chartered and loaded two ships which they expected to sail under convoy of the *South Carolina*. They expected Franklin to pay for these supplies, but he declared that he had only engaged for five thousand pounds sterling, whereas they had purchased up to fifty thousand pounds. These matters necessitated a trip to Paris by Jackson, who arranged the business with Franklin. When the *South Carolina* sailed without her convoy, these goods left behind became the cause of infinite trouble to Adams and to Franklin, by whom the care of them was eventually turned over to Mr. Barclay, upon whose assurance that he had the property in possession, the bills were paid by Franklin. This happened much later, however, and is only told here to dispose finally of this matter.

Thus Laurens's intended assistance to Gillon failed of its object, and, for reasons that we can dimly surmise, only added to his troubles. As the knowledge of these things was spread abroad in Amsterdam, Gillon's situation and that of his ship became critical in the extreme. He was in want of funds and of financial credit, and was now dreading lest his ship should be seized and detained at the suit of those who had advanced money to him. He therefore ran her out of the roads and anchored beyond the jurisdiction of the port. Now he was at the parting of the ways. Delay meant the utter destruction of high hope; for his

country great and assured loss; for himself bankruptcy and a debtor's prison. On the high seas might be reaped that harvest of prize money, which would turn distress to gladness, and only by prompt escape from Holland could he hope ever to deliver in America his cargo.

During this crisis he seems to have retained the good will and good opinion of Mr. Adams, who, if he had heard of it, gave no belief or thought to Franklin's malignant suggestion that the ship's destination was an English port, for he asked a passage for his son Charles. Quite a number of other Americans took passage with him, among whom were Col. John Trumbull, Lieut. Barney, Mr. Bromfield and Dr. Waterhouse. The memoirs of Commodore Barney tell us that he had just escaped from prison in England. Finding his way to Amsterdam, he had there called upon Mr. Adams, who gave him a note to Commodore Gillon, requesting the favour of a passage for him. The frigate was described by him as the finest of her class, with twenty eight long forty-two pounders on her maindeck, and sixteen long twelve pounders on her forecastle, and quarter-deck, and a crew of 550 men. When on board the vessel, he found that she was not going direct, but intended to sail "northabout", *i. e.* by the Orkneys and around Scotland and Ireland. Cruising for several weeks along the coast of Scotland and Ireland, they captured a privateer, and then proceeded to Corunna in Spain. Here he and several other passengers, "who had been equally disappointed in the destination of the ship", left her. It is probable that they had been told that the ship would be pointed for the West Indies, as indeed was actually the case.

But we owe to Col. John Trumbull a graphic account of the voyage from Holland to Corunna, which may be found in his autobiography. He and other passengers boarded her when anchored on the outside, more than a league from land. On August 12th the wind blew heavily from the north-west directly on shore. They dared not run back into the roads lest the ship be seized; they dared not run for the English Channel for fear of meeting a superior force of the enemy, and they could not remain anchored on a lee

shore. They took their only open course, and ran north-east, with sail reduced to close-reefed topsails, upon the very edge of the sands. Fearing for their masts, topsails were taken in, and the ship sped on under a reefed foresail. About ten P. M., when off Heligoland, a heavier squall struck the ship and threw her sail aback. All was confusion and dismay, when happily Barney rushed on deck, saw the danger, took command, and soon had the ship again under control. (This appearance of Barney, a young man of twenty two, as a *deus ex machina*, taking command of a man-of-war with her complement of experienced officers, is not told in Barney's own memoirs.) The wind having now shifted several points, they lay a safe course to the westward on the other tack. Making the Orkney and Shetland Islands, off Faroe they met a still more furious gale, which the writer describes even more graphically. Through this they ran down until off the west coast of Ireland. Then, finding that the supply of water and provisions would hardly carry them to America, they bore away for Corunna, the nearest friendly port, which they reached in a few days. Here Col. Trumbull left the ship.

On page 547 of Volume IV. of Wharton's *Diplomatic Correspondence*, is a note taken from Bigelow's biography of Franklin, which says that it seems there were personal differences between Commodore Gillon, Mr. Jackson, and some of the other passengers, and that Dr. Waterhouse thought the difficulties were chiefly to be ascribed to Mr. Jackson and one or two other passengers, who took offense without just cause, and that Dr. Waterhouse has since written:

I had and always shall have a high degree of respect for Commodore Gillon as an able and honourable man.

A glance at the map will show that in the voyage from the Texel to Corunna, the *South Carolina* nearly circumnavigated the British Isles, avoiding only the English Channel as too dangerous. It would appear that the logic of events had sufficiently disproved the baseless suggestion that Gillon was seeking an opportunity to run the *South Carolina* into an English port. And yet, strange to say,

on her arrival in Corunna this libel was revived and amplified so far that the minister of the United States in Spain became anxious as to whether it might not be advisable for him to apply to the Spanish government to stop the ship, with a view to her preservation. His disquiet was caused by Mr. Searle's "representations against the Commodore's conduct", which were very strong and "tended to create an opinion that the ship and public stores on board of her were in danger". Fortunately his secretary, Mr. Carmichael, did not think well of this mission to Corunna and caused delay and soon after Mr. Jay "received a very long exculpatory letter" from the Commodore, which "placed his transactions in a different point of view". He sent copies of Searle's and Gillon's letters to Franklin, who was prompt in exhibiting his constant interest in the destruction of Gillon, and replied October 16, 1781:

The letters you sent me of Capt. Gillon and Mr. Searle give me as you expected abundant chagrin. I am afraid that Gillon will loiter at Corunna as he did at Amsterdam and sell the goods of the United States, as he did those of South Carolina to defray his expenses, and run away in the same manner, leaving many of his creditors unpaid. I beg you will assist Capt. Jackson whose letter to me is enclosed in the measures he may think proper to take for securing our property.

M. de Vergennes has kindly given me a letter to Comte de Montmorin to the same purpose which I enclose.

The impression suggested by this letter varies sharply from those conveyed to Adams and Laurens. Apparently he did not think that Gillon wished to seek an English port, but to linger in Corunna and there to sell the property in his possession and to create fresh debts, which he might have the pleasure of paying with a fair wind and a free sheet. We must be permitted two further quotations from Franklin's letters. On November 7th he forwarded to Adams a letter written from time to time, in which, under date of October 25th, he says:

The letter from Dr. Waterhouse of which you were so kind to send me a copy is coolly and sensibly written, and has an effect lessening the force of what is written against Gillon by Messrs. Jackson and Searle. On the whole I hardly know as yet what to think of the matter * * * * *

In this letter he mentions that he has learned from Gillon that Searle has left Corunna in the *Ariel*. On November 8,

1781, Franklin wrote to John Laurens, giving some account of the matter of the goods left in Amsterdam when Gillon sailed without the convoy. He then mentioned that Searle and Jackson and other passengers had left at Corunna the *South Carolina*, because they feared that Gillon would at last carry the ship into England; that Jackson had written his opinion that Gillon would certainly have done this, if the money had gone on board, and had thanked him for retaining it; that Gillon had written to him a "sheet of vindication," blaming Searle and Jackson highly. He then continued:

You know I am prejudiced against Gillon so much as to unfit me to be his judge; I therefore leave the affair to the judgment of his superiors.

Franklin apparently chose to forget to mention to Laurens that he himself had first suggested to Jackson and to Vergennes that Gillon's intent was to seek an English destination for his ship, and that Jackson was merely repeating to him a prediction originating with himself and already refuted in fact. A comparison of these three letters last quoted, written within three weeks, will show that, while Franklin hardly knew what to *think* about the matter, he apparently knew what he wished to *say* about it, and that, while leaving the matter to the judgment of Gillon's superiors, he was taking full care that they should have the benefit of his own opinion of it all.

From Corunna the *South Carolina* was headed for Teneriffe, and was lying in the harbour of Santa Cruz on November 24, 1781. On the passage thither, she had captured the brig *Venus*, with salt fish from Newfoundland for Lisbon. This prize was said to have been sold at Santa Cruz, but her cargo was sent to Cadiz and there sold for the equivalent of about \$15,000, and the proceeds were made payable to the State. Landing at this place a number of sick men of her crew, the ship sailed for the West Indies, and arrived at Havana on January 13, 1782, with three ships and two brigantines as prizes. These were sold at Havana, as we are told by Dr. Bancroft, for \$91,500,

and out of them had been taken for the use of the frigate articles to the value of \$9,000 more.

We next hear of the *South Carolina* at the capture of the Bahama Islands, which were surrendered on May 8, 1782, by the British governor, Lieutenant-Colonel John Maxwell, to Don Juan Manuel de Cagigal, Captain-General of the Island of Cuba, and Governor of Havana. In *The Royal Gazette* of June 5th are given the articles of capitulation and some details of the capture. The Spanish force was said to have consisted of 2000 regulars, and 300 colored soldiers embarked in upwards of 60 small vessels, convoyed by the rebel frigate *South Carolina*, and by a Spanish ship of 20 guns. The expedition was piloted by the famous Downham Newton, formerly captain of a rebel privateer out of Charles Town, and by his brother William Newton, and William Woodside, all natives of Charles Town, but commanding at the time three privateers out of Philadelphia. The news of this event also reached Georgetown by the arrival there of a schooner, a prize to the State ship, the *South Carolina*. For this service, after the war, the State of South Carolina asked compensation of his Catholic Majesty, the King of Spain, through the United States ministers. The Bahama Islands were recaptured April 18, 1783, by an expedition from Florida, commanded by Colonel Andrew DeVeaux of South Carolina, a noted Tory officer in the British service.¹

From the West Indies the *South Carolina* sailed with a convoy for Philadelphia. On May 25th, the British privateer *Virginia*, of New York, fell in with her in Latitude 36 degrees north, and followed her fleet to the Delaware, but took no prizes, only venturing near enough to "break her cabin windows", in the hope that the firing might attract to the spot some of his Majesty's ships. It would seem clear that, after discharging her cargo in Philadelphia, it would have been for the best interests of all concerned that the ship should have put to sea at the earliest moment, and have sought to retrieve her financial position by captures

¹See *Gazette* of May 24, 1783, for DeVeaux's letter giving an account of this event.

on the high seas, and the responsibility neither of Gillon nor of the State could have been changed or lessened thereby. By this time too, the State was again in control of her territory. But the Commodore's European troubles had crossed the ocean ahead of him, and he found the French minister prepared to meet him with sundry claims and with legal proceedings, all calculated to cause detention. These troubles culminated in an order for his arrest given by a Pennsylvania court in a civil suit brought against him in the name of the Prince of Luxembourg. He thereupon turned over his command to Capt. Joyner, and set out for South Carolina, while Joyner, to avoid the detention of the ship, put to sea and was captured December 20, 1782, when off the Capes, by three British men-of-war. The account of this may be found in Rivington's *Royal Gazette* (New York) of Wednesday, December 25, 1782, as follows:

Last Thursday night at ten o'clock, off the Delaware, his Majesty's ships Quebec of 32 guns, Christopher Mason Esq; Diomedé of 44 guns,Frederick Esq., and Astrea of 32 guns, Mathew Squires Esq.; fell in with the celebrated and formidable ship South Carolina, commanded by Captain Joyner, carrying 40 guns, twenty eight 42 pounders mounted on her maindeck, and on the quarterdeck and fore-castle twelve 12 pounders, and 450 men, having under convoy from Philadelphia a ship, Brigantine, and Schooner, the latter only escaped.

The South Carolina was chased eighteen hours and a half, when she fired a sternchaser at the Diomedé, which was returned by one of the latter's bow guns; the Diomedé then gave her six broadsides, and she received one from the Quebec; the running fight continued two hours, when her colours were struck to this superior force.

She was bound on a cruise off Charlestown, and taken the day after she sailed; was built in Holland about four years ago; her keel about 160 feet long, and strong as a castle; she lost about six killed and wounded, the British not a man.

This paper further says that Gillon was to have joined the ship again at or near Charles Town. Of the 450 men on board when the *South Carolina* was captured over fifty were Hessian and British soldiers enlisted out of prison in Philadelphia. As she left Amsterdam with 550 men, the desertions from her mixed crew must have been enormous. Thus ended in complete disaster the high hopes of Rutledge, Lowndes, and those who then controlled South Carolina, of advancing her naval power. The first step had been taken when the territory of the State was as yet free from the enemy; when her capital was the rendezvous of the Ameri-

can armed vessels engaged in harassing British trade in the West Indies; when Hall, Tufts, the Newtons, Milligan, Lempriere, Cochran, Seymour, Groundwater, and many others, commanding State vessels of war and privateers, were distinguishing themselves and their State in the naval warfare of the period; when men still spoke of the fiery blast which had swept from the waters Capt. Ioor and a full company of her Continentals who had volunteered for a temporary service as marines on the Continental frigate *Randolph*, under the ill-fated Captain Biddle. Then, while at home the State was passing "through the depths of wretchedness", "back to her place in the republic after suffering more and daring more and achieving more than the men of any other State", there in Europe her commodore and officers, almost forgotten at home, through despondency and rebuffs, with a helping hand and kindly words from one and from another, with enmity and injury coming whence they had expected help, had struggled ceaselessly toward a partial fruition of these hopes. Then, in her long-sought American port, finding herself involved in the same net-work from which she had escaped in Europe, like a crippled bird, "with a manifest Want of seamen aboard the Ship", and "in a defective Condition in almost every necessary Particular", the frigate had sought again the freedom of the high seas, to fall into the hands of the enemy within a week of the very time when the American army was welcomed with smiles and tears of joy, in redeemed Charles Town, and about a month before the preliminary treaty was signed in Paris, January 20, 1783, with the resulting armistice.

The remainder of Gillon's life was spent in the public service. During that time, and for many years after, discussions of the claims arising from the frigate's career took up the time of many sessions of the General Assembly. It is therefore easy to follow his personal history. Soon after his return to South Carolina he was elected to the House of Representatives, and in August, 1783, he was chosen by the Privy Council lieutenant-governor, to fill the unexpired term of Richard Beresford, elected to Congress,

but he declined the office. In March, 1784, he was elected to Congress, and in December of the same year, to the General Assembly again. This body appointed him in March, 1785, a Commissioner for the Speedy Settlement of Public Accounts, and in 1786, we find him on the Committee of Ways and Means. In March, 1786, the General Assembly appointed him a commissioner for "erecting the new town of Columbia", along with Judge Pendleton, Gen. Winn, Col. Richard Hampton, and Col. Thomas Taylor. In December, 1786, he was elected to the House of Representatives both from Charleston (St. Philip's and St. Michael's) and the election district of Saxe Gotha, and qualified for the latter. In December, 1788, he was again elected to the House of Representatives from Saxe Gotha district, having unsuccessfully contested for a seat in the 1st Congress of the United States, against William Loughton Smith and Dr. David Ramsay.

Mrs. Gillon having died on October 24, 1787, he was married for the second time in February, 1789, to Miss Ann Purcell, daughter of Rev. Dr. Purcell, of St. Michael's Parish, Charleston, sometime a chaplain in the Continental service.

He sat as Representative in the 3rd Congress, in 1793, and 1794, until his death. This took place at his plantation (Gillon's Retreat) on the Congaree October 6, 1794.

His will bears date May 9, 1792, and was witnessed by Col. William Thomson, Gen. Charles Cotesworth Pinckney James Otis Prentiss and Benjamin Hart. The executors were his wife, Mrs. Ann (Purcell) Gillon, and Major Pierce Butler, then United States Senator from South Carolina, who both qualified January 20, 1795. The relatives mentioned in this will are his wife, his daughter Ann Purcell Gillon, his father-in-law Dr. Purcell, his nephew Hugh Alexander Nixon, his grand nephew George Nixon and grand-niece Margaret Nixon. The residue of his estate was to be applied to the use of his much esteemed friend Major Pierce Butler, and in case of his death, to go to the children of his friends Gen. Isaac Huger and John Huger, Esq.

Harassed by personal lawsuits growing out of his European engagements, in constant discussion before the General Assembly of the many complications arising from the Luxembourg treaty, Gillon seems to have carried his head high amid the violent political contentions of the decade that followed the war. Not lacking bitter enemies, he yet seems to have held the friendship of many others of the leaders of the Revolution in South Carolina and to have been sustained until his death by the approval of the electorate of his State.